



NEWS RELEASE

Indiana Criminal Justice Institute

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Teen Advocates Mobilize for Change at the 2nd Annual "I AM Summit"

INDIANAPOLIS, IN. – The Indiana Point of Youth (POY), today announced that it will host its 2nd Annual "I AM" (Indiana Advocacy Movement) Youth Summit. As part of the Indiana Criminal Justice Institute's (ICJI) Substance Abuse Services division, POY is a youth led advisory group that lends advice to the Governor, Indiana General Assembly and other policy-makers on substance abuse, underage drinking, and general public safety matters.

The two-day summit will take place on November 3 & 4, 2007 at Jameson Camp located at 2001 South Bridgeport Road. The summit targets Indiana youth in the 9th-12th grades and provides a forum for the teens to discuss priority issues affecting their communities. This year's priority areas include Methamphetamine Use, Over the Counter/ Prescription Drug Abuse and Underage Drinking.

"Youth empowering youth is always an effective way for young people to deal with the social challenges they face. Events that educate teens promote positive, long-term behavioral changes that have the power to reverse many of the disturbing trends that result from drug and alcohol use," said Michael Cunegin, executive director of the Indiana Criminal Justice Institute.

During the summit, POY students will partner with other students from youth groups across the state and assist them with developing solutions that address the priority areas in their respective communities. These strategies will later become a part of each youth group's local action plan. Other highlights of the summit include team-building exercises, games, music, and more.

POY students will also have the opportunity to lead workshops and offer solutions that are designed to build bridges and strengthen ties between the participating youth and their communities.

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“The I AM Summit helps remind me that I, along with the POY group am not alone in wanting to change some aspects of my community and even Indiana. There are other teens that care about the same things that I do, and it makes advocating easier when I know that there are others backing me up,” said POY student Amy Gibson.

At the end of the summit, the teens will have an opportunity to apply for mini-grants from the Indiana Criminal Justice Institute, ranging from \$500-\$1000 to help fund their community-based action plans.

Founded in 1998, POY: Creating Advocates for Safe Communities, was created to encourage youth across the state to take an active role in shaping policy for alcohol, tobacco and drug prevention initiatives. The 27 members that make up the 2007-2008 class represent 19 counties throughout Indiana. They are a diverse group from all regions of Indiana and represent both rural and urban communities. The members range in age from 14-17 years old.

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